

Michigan  
Department  
of Human  
Services

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394

\*Story on/re DHS at this spot

# Articles in Today's Clips

**Friday, September 8, 2006**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

---

Click to read subjects:	Page(s)
Child protection system*	2-24
Juvenile justice*	25
School project*	26-27
Children's Trust Fund*	28
Child support	29-30
Holland case	31-33
Mental health	34
Welfare	35
Abuse-neglect	36-44

[<<Back](#)

## Reaction to Proposed Changes to Child Abuse Laws

Sep 7, 2006 04:21 PM EDT



Sweeping legal reform is how lawmakers want to protect Michigan children from abuse. A multi-bill package rolled out at the Capitol would prevent the abuse and potential death of children, like Ricky Holland, who was killed by his parents.

Lawmakers say these bills are just the first phase in a series of changes coming to the way police and the state investigate potential child abuse. What legislators unveiled has already got the department that oversees child protection issues talking.

When police are called to a domestic abuse scene, if there is a child living in the house, how they handle the call could change. Right now officers don't have to directly notify the state agency responsible for child welfare, but a multi bill package announced to keep all Michigan children safe from abuse would change that.

Marianne Udow, Dir. of Dept. of Human Services: "Obviously this is not a simple issue to fix."

Some of the bills would require officers contact the Department of Human Services right away and give workers there guidelines on what to do next. Marianne Udow is the agency's director.

Marianne Udow: "We haven't seen the package of bills yet, but we'll be very interested to see if they add more staff to reflect the increased workload."

The legislation comes after a special committee investigation into how 7-year-old Ricky Holland died in the care of his parents.

Marianne Udow: "Over the last six months, we've conducted a series of hearings and heard from a series of witnesses."

Moving oversight of the agency that investigates cases like Ricky Holland is another solution to the problem lawmakers say they heard. Right now the state's child ombudsman works under the executive branch of government. Some representatives say that can create the appearance of problems. Udow argues the ombudsman's office is independent. Both Udow and legislators say they want to see the system changed for the better, but everyone needs to come together to make that happen.

Next week is when lawmakers say they want to come together with DHS to get their input on the proposed laws to keep children safe. The director of DHS says she happy to do so at any time.



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2006 WorldNow and WLNS. All Rights Reserved.  
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).



## Michigan House committee wants changes in child safety system

9/7/2006, 6:10 p.m. ET

**The Associated Press**

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan's child protection workers would conduct more investigations and an ombudsman charged with assuring children's safety would have a revamped oversight system under proposals made Thursday by Republican lawmakers.

The legislation follows hearings conducted by the House Special Committee on Child Protection, which began investigating child safety after the deaths of 7-year-old Ricky Holland of Williamston and other children.

Some of the bills could be approved in the GOP-controlled House soon, though it is unclear if they will reach Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm's desk by the end of the year, when bills die.

One proposal would move the state Office of the Children's Ombudsman from the executive branch of government to the nonpartisan legislative service bureau. Supporters of the plan say that would give the ombudsman more independence, with less political influence, to investigate child safety cases and make recommendations to improve the system.

But the governor's spokeswoman and the state Department of Human Services, which handles child protection, said the ombudsman's office already is independent. Unlike in the past, the appointment of an ombudsman is subject to approval by the state Senate.

Another proposal — first unveiled by Republican Attorney General Mike Cox in March — would require law enforcement to notify DHS of domestic violence incidents when they occur in homes where children are present. Child protection workers would then be required to investigate those reports of domestic violence.

Cox said there is a strong correlation between domestic violence and child abuse and argued his proposal would create an early warning system for notification among government agencies. Workers at domestic violence shelters, however, say the proposal could make women more reluctant to call police out of fear of losing their children.

Rep. David Law, a Republican from Oakland County's Commerce Township and chair of the child protection committee, said the bills announced Thursday are just the first in a wave of legislation planned to address the child protection system.

Law said DHS officials will be invited to testify on the committee's suggestions and make some of their own.

"Obviously, this is not a simple issue to fix," Law said. "But we're going to do our best to fix it."

Law has been frustrated that he has not received records he requested in the Holland case from the ombudsman office.

Holland's adoptive parents are accused of killing him last summer, and his adoptive father pleaded guilty to second-degree murder earlier this week and will testify against his wife at her trial.

DHS Director Marianne Udow said prosecutors have told her office and Ombudsman Verlie Ruffin they cannot release records in an ongoing case.

"I know none of us would want to do anything to compromise that case," she said.

A spokesman for House Speaker Craig DeRoche said the special committee could go into a closed session to maintain the secrecy of names and other sensitive information in the Holland case.

DeRoche, R-Novi, blasted Granholm's leadership by citing failures on child protection and in the prison system. Patrick Selepak pleaded guilty to killing three people earlier this year after mistakenly being released from prison.

But Granholm spokeswoman Liz Boyd said the governor's administration demanded policy changes after the Selepak case and fired parole workers involved in his release. And Udow, while welcoming lawmakers' focus on reforming the child welfare system, said her office already has made fundamental changes in recent years.

Copyright 2006 Associated Press. All rights reserved.  
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

© 2006 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published September 8, 2006

## Lawmakers want ombudsman's office moved

By Chris Andrews  
Lansing State Journal

### Related articles:

- Expert: Lisa Holland craved attention

Michigan children would be better protected by moving the Children's Ombudsman Office from the executive branch to the Legislative Service Bureau, House Republicans recommended Thursday.

The recommendation was among several designed to protect children. It came after a series of hearings prompted by the death of 7-year-old Ricky Holland of Williamston.

State Rep. David Law, who chaired the committee that held the hearings, said the change would ensure that the ombudsman has the freedom to fully investigate cases.

"It's imperative that these investigations are independent. It's imperative that investigations are transparent," said Law, R-Commerce Township.

The governor currently appoints the ombudsman.

Marianne Udow, director of the Department of Human Services, said the ombudsman's office is located in a different department - Management and Budget - and routinely has exercised independence and found shortcomings in children's services.

"They provide a very important role in oversight," Udow said.

She said Gov. Jennifer Granholm has made recent changes to improve child welfare by adding 51 protective services workers, providing additional training and expanding the use of criminal background checks.

House Republicans made several other recommendations. Among them:

- Requiring police to report to Child Protective Services when responding to domestic violence complaints at homes where children live.
- Requiring Child Protective Services to monitor family cases even if the risk of harm is deemed to be low or moderate.

Udow said the department handles 77,000 complaints annually and prioritizes them based on risk category. It will require additional staff to monitor more cases, she said.

Law said he hasn't been able to get data from the department about current caseloads.

Contact Chris Andrews at 377-1054 or [candrews@lsj.com](mailto:candrews@lsj.com).

---

Copyright 2006 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the  
Terms of Service (updated 12.20.02)

[\[Back\]](#)

[Yahoo!](#) [My Yahoo!](#) [Mail](#)

Search:

**Web Search**



[Sign In](#)  
New User? [Sign Up](#)

[Finance Home](#) - [Help](#)



Welcome [\[Sign In\]](#)

To track stocks & more, [Register](#)

## Financial News

Enter symbol(s)

Basic

[Symbol Lookup](#)

Press Release

Source: Michigan Attorney General

# Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox Calls for Stronger Notification & Investigation to Protect Children at Risk of Abuse in Testimony Before House Committee

Thursday September 7, 1:20 pm ET

## "There is a problem with Michigan's system of protecting children"

LANSING, Mich., Sept. 7 /PRNewswire/ -- In testimony before the Michigan House of Representatives Special Committee on Child Protection, Attorney General Mike Cox called for a series of legislative changes that would increase protections for children at risk of abuse.

"There is a wide and growing body of research that demonstrates a strong correlation between domestic violence and child abuse," Cox said. "Government needs to pick up on these signals, so that more violence and abuse can be prevented."

The reforms proposed by Cox would, in essence, establish an early-warning system for children at risk of abuse by increasing requirements for notification among government agencies and follow-up investigations.

"First, in cases of domestic violence, I am proposing legislation requiring the arresting or investigating agency to notify the Department of Human Services, or, more specifically, Child Protective Services of domestic violence incidents when they occur in households where children are present," Cox said.

"Second, I am proposing legislation requiring Child Protective Services (CPS) personnel to follow up on those notifications by investigating all reports of domestic violence for potential impact on the children present in the household."

Cox's recommendations draw on research done by his office as well as numerous national studies.

\* A study by the Michigan Attorney General's office revealed that, since 1998, Wayne County Juvenile Court Child Protective Proceedings recorded 58 child fatalities. Of those, 34 had reports of domestic violence involving one or more of the adult parental members of the household. Or, to put it another way, 58 percent of child fatalities occurred in homes that had documented domestic abuse.

\* An additional study by the Attorney General's office shows that, of the 1,760 new abuse and neglect cases opened in Wayne County between January 1, 2005, and March 16, 2006, a total of 469 involved domestic violence cases, PPOs, or stalking orders (27 percent).

\* A 1995 report (Jeffrey Edelman) found that in 32-to-53 percent of all families where women are beaten, the children are also abused by the same perpetrator.

\* The Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services (2003), has found there are child and adult victims in 30-to-60 percent of families experiencing domestic violence.

\* And a 1988 study (Stark and Flitcraft) reported 45 percent of hospitalized abused children had mothers who demonstrated the physical characteristics of being beaten.

"These studies involve percentages and numbers, but each percentage, each number represents a young boy or girl. If we can make changes legislatively



that can help prevent abuse and save the lives of these children, then we have an obligation to act," Cox said.

Cox noted that there have been reports of a long history of domestic violence involving the parents of Ricky Holland, the 7-year-old boy from Williamston in Ingham County who died in 2005.

"Nothing we say or do can bring Ricky Holland back. But the tragedy of Ricky's death will be compounded if we do not learn from the circumstances that led to his death and institute changes to help protect Michigan's most valuable resource -- our children," Cox said.

---

Source: Michigan Attorney General

---

Copyright © 2006 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved. [Privacy Policy](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Copyright Policy](#) - [Ad Feedback](#)  
Copyright © 2006 [PR Newswire](#). All rights reserved. Republication or redistribution of PRNewswire content is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of PRNewswire. PRNewswire shall not be liable for any errors or delays in the content, or for any actions taken in reliance thereon.

## DeRoche rips Granholm on prisons, child protection

**BY DAWSON BELL**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

*September 8, 2006*

Michigan House Speaker Craig DeRoche accused Gov. Jennifer Granholm and her administration Thursday of widespread failures in the management of child protection and prisons.

DeRoche, R-Novi, said the recent deaths of children and prisoners under the state's care have reached "crisis level" but are being ignored for political purposes.

DeRoche unloaded on Granholm and her top aides in the departments of Human Services and Corrections at a session with reporters on the House floor. "What we're seeing ... in case after case ... is outright failure," DeRoche said.

"These cases are being swept under the rug for political expedience. People are dying; it needs to be fixed."

DeRoche said his frustration boiled over Thursday when Granholm's spokeswoman Liz Boyd criticized proposed changes in the Children's Ombudsman office by saying the system in place now "really does work."

On Thursday, Boyd ridiculed the speaker's complaints as unfounded.

If DeRoche really cared about kids, he would not have promoted repeal of the state's main business tax, blowing "a \$2-billion hole in the state budget," Boyd said.

Contact **DAWSON BELL** at 313-222-6604 or [dbell@freepress.com](mailto:dbell@freepress.com).

**Copyright © 2006 Detroit Free Press Inc.**

## **Speaker Hits Granholm On Child Protection 'Failures'**

MIRS, Thursday, September 7, 2006

In his strongest criticism to date of the Democratic governor, House Speaker Craig **DeROCHE** (R-Novi) is accusing the Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** administration of trying to "shove under the rug" its alleged mismanagement of the Ricky **HOLLAND** case, the death of a foster care child in Detroit and the death of an inmate in Jackson prison.

"Michigan has two departments that are basically in crisis, Human Services and Corrections, where people are dying," the Novi lawmaker told *MIRS*. "They are failing miserably."

"I'm shocked and appalled at the administration's inability — because an election is going on — to address the lack of accountability and the mistakes that have been made for fear that it will affect the gubernatorial election."

Meanwhile, House Minority Leader Dianne **BYRUM** (D-Onondaga), who said she did not hear the Speaker's remarks, said she has had private concerns about the Holland case being used for political gain by the GOP.

"The worse thing that could happen both in terms of the memory of Ricky and other children out there that are at risk for abuse and neglect would be to insert politics at the height of the political season," Byrum said.

Byrum added that she plans to take the high road on the issue and will call the Republicans on it if they take the low road.

The Speaker was asked if he was playing politics.

"I plead absolutely not guilty," DeRoche said.

He said this is an accountability issue and claimed the administration's "access has been slow, the information isn't forthcoming (and) there's no accountability within the management structure . . . it's a horrible lapse of governance and management," he concluded.

And he wasn't done.

"The Governor can't blame Ricky Holland and her department's handling of this on John **ENGLER** or George W. **BUSH**. These things are coming home to roost and they are coming home to roost now and the Governor needs to deal with them. People are dying. She's been in office three and a half years...and we're not seeing any change."

The GOP Attorney General Mike **COX** was asked to comment on the rock throwing by the Speaker, given his status as attorney for the Human Services Department (DHS).

Cox told *MIRS* that there is no current proof of any wrongdoing because, "We have not done an investigation. So I can't speak to how Child Protective Services or the Department of Human Services has handled the case . . . there will be plenty of time to toss rocks later on."

In response to DeRoche's statements today, Granholm spokesperson Liz **BOYD** said the Speaker hasn't much of track record in the area of child protection, while Granholm has an excellent track record.

"If the Speaker is really concerned about protecting children, how does he explain the fact the he supported blowing a \$2 billion hole in the budget?" Boyd asked. "The Governor has called for an overhaul of the child protection system, she's provided funding for additional caseworkers, she's demanded monthly background checks, and added family support for those on welfare and in the schools."

In regard to the Patrick **SELEPAK** case (which DeRoche mentioned today as well), Boyd pointed out that Granholm has called for those responsible for Selepak being released to be fired.

Following today's House session, DeRoche verbally lit into the administration once more, focusing his remarks on comments attributed to Boyd in a *Detroit News* article. The article was about a package of bills pertaining to child protection in domestic violence settings. It was announced today by Rep. David [LAW](#) (R-Commerce Twp.) (See related story.)

In the article, Boyd said that: "To move (the Office of the Children's Ombudsman) to the responsibility solely of the Legislature (as the package calls for) really would politicize it. There would be a temptation by lawmakers to play politics in an election year, just as they are doing now."

But the statement DeRoche keyed on was when Boyd was quoted as saying: "We think the system we have in place now really does work."

Considering that Law's legislation is being introduced in the wake of three separate, and comparatively recent, incidents of child abusive situations that resulted in a child's death, (Holland, Rose **KELLEY**, and Isaac **LETHBRIDGE**) the "really does work" portion of Boyd's statement was ready fodder for the GOP's mill.

"I'm curious to know exactly which system the governor thinks is working," DeRoche told reporters. "This system didn't work for Ricky Holland. It didn't work for Rose Kelley, and it didn't work for Isaac Lethbridge. The system is a failure, and when we propose reforms, the governor plays the politics card to cover her back."

In regard to the Jackson prison death, it should be noted that the Governor has ordered a full review.

And in the Holland matter, the state says it cannot release all the information because the courts have prevented that.

*(Portions of the Article Were Contributed by Capitol Correspondent Tim [SKUBICK](#)).*

## **Child Protection Reform Bills Announced**

MIRS, Thursday, September 7, 2006

Today, Rep. David **LAW** (R-Commerce Twp.) announced legislation aimed at putting law enforcement agencies nearer the front line on issues of child protection and, as much as possible, insulating the state's top child protection advocate from political and bureaucratic influences.

Unlike some legislation announced in September of an election year, the package appears to be aimed beyond Election Day. This, of course, does not mean that the timing of its announcement wasn't engineered to accommodate politics. In fact, House Speaker Craig **DeROCHE** (R-Novi) arguably upstaged the more substantive aspects of the legislation today as he took rhetorical swings at the administration of Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** on the issue (See related story).

However, beyond the immediate politics of the issue, the legislation Law introduced is arguably a continuation of the legislative battle started back in 1999 by Rep Lauren **HAGER** (R-Port Huron).

Between 1999 and 2003, Hager repeatedly introduced, tweaked and reformatted legislation known as Ariana's law, in response to the case of Ariana **SWINSON**, a young child who died in 1999 after her parents starved and beat her.

According to press accounts and testimony before legislative committees, prior to her death, the child had thrived under the care of a relative, but the Family Independence Agency (now the DHS) allowed her to be returned to her parents, who brutally murdered her after months of abuse.

Hager finally got a form of his legislation passed as the end of his House career approached in 2004. What may have made his experience unique is that it straddled two administrations, the John **ENGLER** and the Granholm administrations.

In the case of both administrations, the executive branch weighed in against much of the proposed legislation, as it defended the departments' position in regard to issues involving the confidentiality of private citizens, the need of freedom of action and the role of child protection workers who make judgment calls. Exactly where the lines fell between these considerations and questions of turf battles between the legislative branch and executive branch, is difficult to ascertain.

Today, *MIRS* asked Hager, who was present for the news conference announcing the legislation, how much of his legislation (a half loaf, two-thirds loaf, etc.) he felt he'd gotten enacted during his five-year effort.

"I'd say maybe as much as a third of a loaf," Hager responded. "But I think one of my concerns is that we're not even following through with that one-third. This is why I'm glad to see that there are others carrying on, now that I'm gone."

However, the primary portion of the new legislation that pertains to Hager's past legislation is Law's bill to move the Children's Ombudsman position from the Department of Human Services (DHS) in the executive branch to the nonpartisan Legislative Service Bureau (LSB).

The argument for such a move would be that the ombudsman should be as independent as possible and not dependent on any partisan bureaucracy.

But DHS Director Marianne **UDOW** told *MIRS* today that there's no reason for such a move.

"I would ask those who want this, what they can point to as far as the current children's ombudsman's track record that would be a reason for changing it," Udow said. "And don't forget that under Governor Granholm, we did adopt Ariana's Law. It really just went into effect. Let's give that a chance for a couple of years."

Udow pointed out that under Ariana's Law, the Senate has to approve the appointment of the ombudsman, the

ombudsman's decisions are public and subject to review and the ombudsmen has greater independence.

"We have put more accountability into the system," Udow said.

Law was asked how such an ombudsman would be selected. Currently, the Governor appoints someone to the post. Law said he hadn't decided how a newly constituted ombudsman should be named. Hager suggested that the Legislature could come up with three nominees from which a Governor could choose.

As Law made his announcement today, he was flanked by other sponsors of bills from the package — Reps. Barb [VANDER VEEN](#) (R-Allendale) and Rick [BAXTER](#) (R-Hanover).

In addition to the bill to move the ombudsman, the package would:

- Require law enforcement to report all domestic violence cases where a child is a factor to the DHS
- Require Child Protection Service to investigate cases reported to them by law enforcement because of domestic violence
- Require Child Protective Services to monitor family cases even if low or moderate risk of future harm to children exists — Category III (where CPS services are required and there is a low to moderate risk of future harm to the child). Vander Veen said that for some reason Category III children seem to have the greatest incidence of deaths.
- Allow cases where there is a low to moderate risk of future harm to be placed in a central database similar to high or intensive risk

These portions of the legislative package originated with suggestions made by Attorney General Mike [COX](#) last spring.

Following today's House session, Cox testified before Law's committee. He said the legislation would in essence establish an early-warning system for children at risk of abuse by increasing requirements for notification among government agencies and follow-up investigations.

"There is a wide and growing body of research that demonstrates a strong correlation between domestic violence and child abuse," Cox told the committee. "Government needs to pick up on these signals so that more violence and abuse can be prevented."

Cox listed numerous studies his office used to backup the recommendation, including one that showed that 58 percent of child fatalities occur in homes that have documented domestic abuse.

Overall, Udow's comment on the proposed legislation was that she welcomes the Legislature's interest in child protection and would like to work with lawmakers on continuing improvements, such as the tracking of families who have had involvement with CPS workers and increased criminal background checks.

Law, who chairs the House Special Committee on Child Protection, stressed today that the package he was announcing is just the opening round of legislation on the topic and that he wants the package to move as quickly as possible, but not necessarily on a time-line that would send it to Granholm's desk before Election Day.

Basically, *MIRS* asked Law the loaded question as to whether it might be important to get the legislation to Granholm prior to Election Day on the premise that she might be less likely to veto under those circumstances.

But Law didn't take the bait. Instead he said he had anticipated a reporter question about the timing of the legislation as to whether it is just a political ploy - to which he was prepared to answer, "no." In fact, Law pointed out that the issue, including additional legislation, would go beyond Election Day and he said he plans to pursue it throughout his career in the House.

But in regard to moving the bills quickly to pressure the Governor to sign them, Law said he hadn't considered it.

"I really hadn't thought about it from that angle," Law said. "That is interesting, but my plan is to move ahead with the committee hearings. I would like to see it move as quickly as possible, but I'd also like to get some more testimony and give the committee enough time to digest the information we get."

*MIRS* also asked Law if he's discussed the legislation with anyone over on the Senate side of the Capitol.

"Not yet," Law responded.

Three Senators introduced bills today that will affect child protection laws. Sen. Bill [HARDIMAN](#) (R-Kentwood) introduced a bill (SB 1410) that would require follow up procedure for licensed facilities that have reported abuse; Sen. Gerald [VAN WOERKOM](#) (R-Muskegon) introduced a bill (SB 1411) that would require background checks for foster parents; and Sen. Alan [SANBORN](#) (R-Richmond) introduced a bill (SB 1412) that would require the state to submit central registry cases to a national database.

So, at least it appears that while the issue is receiving a good deal of political play, at the rhetorical level, trying get the legislation to Granholm for a potentially awkward veto or signing isn't currently part of the plan.

## **SPEAKER TAKES AIM AT ADMINISTRATION, G.O.P. ANNOUNCES REFORMS**

**Gongwer News Service**

**Sept. 7, 2006**

Reflecting on the systematic failures in the Department of Human Services relating to cases like Ricky Holland's, as well as in the Department of Corrections in the case of the early release of convicted murderer Patrick Selepak, House [Speaker Craig DeRoche](#) (R-Nov) on Thursday released a barrage of criticisms of the administration for its management in the wake of the horrific events and of the governor's ability to do her job.

The administration charged back that Mr. DeRoche was more interested in the politics of the issue than of the substance.

Thursday started with a press conference regarding legislation House Republicans introduced to enable the state to take in more information on domestic violence cases that include a child in the home, as well as requiring further database monitoring of family cases considered to be low or moderate risk of child abuse. Lawmakers also announced they were looking to move the Office of Children's Ombudsman under the realm of the Legislative Service Bureau. Another House subcommittee is working on proposals regarding Corrections reforms in the wake of the Selepak case.

But things got more heated on the House floor when Mr. DeRoche began an unplanned discussion with reporters in which he claimed that the child abuse cases, including the recent child deaths of Rose Kelley of Flint and Isaac Lethbridge of Detroit, were "being swept under the rug for political reasons."

"In case after case ... we have outright failures," he said. "The failures are reaching crisis levels. I know it's inconvenient for the governor to actually govern. This is not something she can blame on John Engler."

Mr. DeRoche said it was a disgrace for the administration to say in a Detroit News article that the ombudsman system is working.

Granholm spokesperson Liz Boyd was quoted in the article as saying, "To move (the Office of the Children's Ombudsman) to the responsibility solely of the Legislature really would politicize it. There would be a temptation by lawmakers to play politics in an election year, just as they are doing now. We think the system we have in place now really does work."

On Thursday, Ms. Boyd argued that if the speaker truly cared about child welfare and public safety, "he wouldn't be blowing a \$2 billion hole in state budget," referring of course to the repeal of the Single Business Tax, which would go away at the end of 2007.

Ms. Boyd said the governor has led efforts to hire additional caseworkers during budget negotiations this year and has demanded that those individuals responsible for the early release of Mr. Selepak be fired, which did occur.

Human Services Director Marianne Udow also defended her department, saying that [reforms](#) have been made and that some of the legislative proposals were already in place.

"Generally we are delighted the Legislature is focused on child welfare issues because that has been our priority," she said.

Child welfare in the state is being fundamentally reformed due to the establishment of the Family-to-Family approach, which is operational in 38 counties with 28 more coming online by the end of the year, Ms. Udow said. In 2005, 80 percent of children remained with their families after returning from outside placement after a year. The department has also seen a 2 percent reduction in the number of children in foster care placements between 2004 and 2005 and 95.4 percent of children involved in a Child Protective Services case had no further activity within six months of their cases being closed, which is above the national average of 93.9 percent, according to statistics provided by the department.



Ms. Udow also pointed to safety reforms that meant monthly criminal background checks on all unlicensed relatives and licensed caregivers, as well as relative caregiver screening that occurs within one day of a child being placed into someone else's care.

One family is now under one file in the department thanks to technological advances, she said, and protective care, foster care, and adoption supervisors now undergo mandatory training. Caseworkers and supervisors also receive training in forensic interviewing so they are better able to detect dangerous situations involving children, Ms. Udow said.

What is still an issue and what the department is working to educate people, she said, is having community members alert the department when they have concerns, which was one of the problems associated with Ms. Kelley's case.

Legislative Republicans are trying to reform the system as well with [HB 6440](#), [HB 6441](#), [HB 6442](#), [HB 6443](#), [HB 6444](#) and [HB 6445](#), though one of lead sponsors, [Rep. David Law](#) (R-Commerce Township), who also chairs the special subcommittee, said as the department sits down with lawmakers more bills will likely be added to the package.

Two of the bills work off of a proposal by Attorney General Mike Cox, who in March called for requiring police agencies to notify CPS whenever there is evidence of domestic violence, whether or not the situation involved a child (See [Gongwer Michigan Report, March 23, 2006](#)).

Mr. Cox testified before the Special Committee on Child Protection, after the House had concluded its work, saying studies have shown that homes where domestic violence takes place between a couple often lead to situations where a child is abused as well.

"Agencies are not informed unless the kids are showing signs of child abuse," he said.

After the police inform CPS, the agency would then be required to investigate the case and take appropriate action if needed.

That raised a flag with some Republicans on the panel, as well as domestic violence treatment advocates, who said that a person may be less likely to report a case of abuse if he or she knows that protective services is coming right after the police leave.

[Rep. Jack Hoogendyk](#) (R-Portage) said he was concerned the legislation would give the department too much power to investigate situations where no investigation is really necessary. Striking the right balance between protecting children and not creating a worse situation for a family is critical as the panel moves forward with its work, he said. [Rep. Barb Vander Veen](#) (R-Allendale) expressed similar feelings.

Rebecca Visconti-Mason, with the Department of Attorney General, argued that while a domestic violence case does not always mean a child is being abused, most domestic violence cases do escalate eventually without intervention and that it would not hurt to have this type of protocol in place just in case.

Ms. Udow said that while she had not seen the proposed legislation, she did not believe those bills are needed because law enforcement officers already inform the department when the safety of a child is questioned in relation to a domestic violence situation.

Under the proposed legislation, CPS would also have to monitor low and moderate risk cases (known as Category III) with information placed in a database as the department already does with high-risk cases (Category I and Category II).

However, [Rep. Bill McConico](#) (D-Detroit) questioned how an already strained CPS workforce was expected to deal with the additional duties outlined in the legislation.

Ms. Udow also expressed concern for how much paperwork and staffing would be required with increased investigations.

Mr. Law earlier had said that while anecdotal tales of caseloads have surfaced, he has not been given any hard facts on that concept. “As of right now I haven’t received anything and I’ve asked for everything,” he said at the morning press conference.

Ms. Visconti-Mason said that while the number of referrals to CPS would increase by approximately 5 percent based on State Police numbers of 6,200 cases, the cost of doing the investigation would outweigh the fallout of costs associated with placing a child into foster care and any court costs that may be incurred.

She estimated the department may need five to 15 additional caseworkers to handle the load, which would cost anywhere between \$830,000 to \$1 million for paid work associated with eight hours of case investigation.

But Mary Lovik, an attorney with the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention Treatment Board, said that the requirement would not only mean adding additional caseworkers on the line, but also providing professional support services for families that could cost upward of \$30 million.

“This is a problem with no simple solutions,” she said.

While Mr. Law said that the panel hopes to have the department in for testimony as early as next week on the bills, he also told Ms. Lovik and others they would be given a chance to speak more extensively in the future.

In regard to the ombudsman issue, during the press conference Mr. Law said that while he did not accuse anyone of impropriety in that office, even the possibility of impropriety shows that the office should be under the eyes of a non-partisan LSB.

Currently, the governor appoints the ombudsman with confirmation required by the Senate.

But former Rep. Lauren Hager, who also attended the press conference, insisted that the current and past administration has hidden behind the issue of confidentiality when it comes to child welfare cases and that moving the ombudsman’s office “has got to happen, there is no other way.”



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published September 8, 2006

## Lawmakers want ombudsman's office moved

By Chris Andrews  
Lansing State Journal

### Related articles:

- Expert: Lisa Holland craved attention

Michigan children would be better protected by moving the Children's Ombudsman Office from the executive branch to the Legislative Service Bureau, House Republicans recommended Thursday.

The recommendation was among several designed to protect children. It came after a series of hearings prompted by the death of 7-year-old Ricky Holland of Williamston.

State Rep. David Law, who chaired the committee that held the hearings, said the change would ensure that the ombudsman has the freedom to fully investigate cases.

"It's imperative that these investigations are independent. It's imperative that investigations are transparent," said Law, R-Commerce Township.

The governor currently appoints the ombudsman.

Marianne Udow, director of the Department of Human Services, said the ombudsman's office is located in a different department - Management and Budget - and routinely has exercised independence and found shortcomings in children's services.

"They provide a very important role in oversight," Udow said.

She said Gov. Jennifer Granholm has made recent changes to improve child welfare by adding 51 protective services workers, providing additional training and expanding the use of criminal background checks.

House Republicans made several other recommendations. Among them:

- Requiring police to report to Child Protective Services when responding to domestic violence complaints at homes where children live.
- Requiring Child Protective Services to monitor family cases even if the risk of harm is deemed to be low or moderate.

Udow said the department handles 77,000 complaints annually and prioritizes them based on risk category. It will require additional staff to monitor more cases, she said.

Law said he hasn't been able to get data from the department about current caseloads.

Contact Chris Andrews at 377-1054 or [candrews@lsj.com](mailto:candrews@lsj.com).

---

Copyright 2006 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the  
Terms of Service (updated 12.20.02)

[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to regular web page](#)



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

September 7, 2006

## Legislation package aims to better protect children

Ombudsman would answer to lawmakers under proposal that follows death of Ricky, 7.

**Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News**

Gov. Jennifer Granholm would be stripped of control over the state children's ombudsman under legislation to be introduced in Lansing today by a legislative committee investigating the death of 7-year-old Ricky Holland.

The first wave of what lawmakers promise will be a sweeping overhaul of child welfare, the seven bills would restructure accountability for the Department of Human Services while tightening reporting and monitoring of child abuse by state workers and law enforcement.

"Let's be proactive, and maybe we can prevent another Ricky Holland case," said Attorney General Mike Cox, who supports the bills to be introduced by members of the House Special Committee on Child Protection formed after the adopted boy was found dead in January. His father pleaded guilty to second-degree murder Tuesday; his mother is charged with murder in the killing.

"If we were to follow these signals earlier on, we could shape up some of these families so less children would be hurt and less would go into foster care," Cox said.

The bills proposed by the committee, led by state Rep. David Law, R-Commerce Township, would:

Require police to report to Children's Protective Services when they handle domestic violence complaints at homes where children live and force state workers to investigate.

Force the state to monitor families found to be at even low to moderate risk of harming children.

Keep the names of potential or suspected abusers in a central database, even if they pose a low risk. The current one only tracks those who are at high risk of abuse.

Make the children's ombudsman answer to the Legislature rather than the governor. The current ombudsman, Verlie Ruffin, has refused to release files on the Ricky Holland case that lawmakers requested for their investigation.

"The trouble stems from even the appearance that (the ombudsman) may not be independent, because they're reviewing who they report to," Law said. "I do have my concerns regarding the independence of their investigations."

Ruffin didn't return calls for comment Wednesday.

Granholm spokeswoman Liz Boyd said the current system represents a compromise between the governor's office and the Legislature. The governor makes the appointment, but the state Senate has to approve it.

"To move (the Office of the Children's Ombudsman) to the responsibility solely of the Legislature really would politicize it," Boyd said. "There would be a temptation by lawmakers to play politics in an election year, just as they are doing now."

"We think the system we have in place now really does work"

You can reach Karen Bouffard at (734) 462-2206 or [kbouffard@detnews.com](mailto:kbouffard@detnews.com).

[Return to regular web page](#)

# Ricky's death prompts state to act

## Protections sought when violence gets too close to kids

**BY JACK KRESNAK**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

*September 8, 2006*

LANSING -- Citing the well-publicized killing of 7-year-old Ricky Holland, Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox told a House committee on Thursday that the state should require police agencies to notify state investigators whenever a child is involved in a domestic violence complaint.

Cox spoke as the House Special Committee on Child Protection, formed to investigate the state's child protection system after Ricky's death last year, proposed other changes, including moving the Children's Ombudsman office from the executive to the legislative branch.

The package of bills should be ready for introduction by next week, said state Rep. David Law, R-Commerce Township, the committee chair.

Cox admitted the domestic violence reporting requirement would create an added burden for the state's 770 child abuse investigators, but he said it ultimately would save money because it would provide earlier warnings of potential abuse.

"How much has the state paid for the placements of Ricky Holland's siblings and how much has the Ingham County Prosecutor's Office spent prosecuting the case?" Cox said.

Ricky might not have been helped if such a provision had been on the books, because no domestic incidents involving his adoptive parents were reported to police, but Cox cited two studies he said show a direct link between domestic violence and child abuse.

As a state ward, Ricky was placed in the licensed foster home of Tim and Lisa Holland and then adopted by the Williamston couple in 2003 after his birth mother's rights were terminated. Tim Holland pleaded guilty this week to second-degree murder in the boy's death and agreed to testify against his wife at her murder trial Monday.

Of 55,000 reports of domestic violence collected by the Michigan State Police last year, 6,230 involved children age 19 and younger, Cox said. He estimated the state would need five to 15 more workers to handle the additional caseload.

Law said the proposed change involving the Children's Ombudsman is needed because the governor controls both that office and the agency it investigates, the Department of Human Services, posing a potential conflict.

The Children's Ombudsman office probes complaints against the child protection, foster care and adoption systems. It was created in 1994 under then-Gov. John Engler, who fought to keep the office under the executive branch.



Ricky Holland, 7, of Williamston died in 2005.

### Among the proposals

The House Special Committee on Child Protection and Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox propose these changes:

- Add the definition of domestic violence to the child protection law.
- Require police to file a completed report on any domestic violence investigation involving children with state Child Protective Services workers.

In 2004, legislation called Ariana's Law -- prompted by another child abuse death in 2000 -- gave the state Senate advice-and-consent power over the ombudsman's appointment.

"I would be real concerned with any legislation that would reduce our current autonomy or politicize this office," Verlie Ruffin, the current ombudsman, said Thursday.

Liz Boyd, a spokeswoman for Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm, said Granholm opposes transferring the ombudsman's office to the Legislature. "They would be tempted to play politics in an election year, as they are doing now," Boyd said.

Marianne Udow, director of the Department of Human Services, noted that the ombudsman office is part of the Department of Management and Budget, not her department.

"We think they give a very objective review, and it's a very important part of the process," Udow said.

Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or [jkresnak@freepress.com](mailto:jkresnak@freepress.com).

**Copyright © 2006 Detroit Free Press Inc.**

- Require the state Department of Human Services to investigate reports of domestic violence when children are involved.

- Place the names of people who are at low or moderate risk of mistreating children on the state's central registry of abusers.

- Make the department mark as "substantiated" such cases of low to moderate maltreatment.

- Move control of the Children's Ombudsman's Office to the legislative branch from the executive branch.

# ClickOnDetroit.com

## Child Safety System Could Soon Be Revamped

POSTED: 1:43 pm EDT September 7, 2006

UPDATED: 2:04 pm EDT September 7, 2006

Michigan's child protection services employees would conduct more investigations and an ombudsman charged with assuring children's safety would have a revamped oversight system under proposals made Thursday by a state House subcommittee.

The committee was formed to look into child safety following the deaths of 7-year-old Ricky Holland of Williamston and other children in Michigan. The committee plans to introduce legislation aimed at improving the protection system, and some of the bills could be voted on in the Legislature this year.

A key proposal involves moving the state's Office of the Children's Ombudsman from the executive branch of government to the nonpartisan legislative service bureau. Supporters of the plan say that could give the ombudsman more independence, with less political influence, to investigate child safety cases and make recommendations to improve the system.

Rep. David Law, a Republican from Oakland County's Commerce Township, said the bills announced Thursday are just the first in a wave of legislation planned to address the system.

Law has been frustrated that he has not received records he requested in the Holland case from the ombudsman office.

Holland's adoptive parents are accused of killing him last summer.

*Copyright 2006 by The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.*



## **PANEL LOOKS AT PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE ISSUE IN JUVENILE JUSTICE**

Gongwer News Service

Sept. 7, 2006

The state could be better served if the juvenile justice program focused more on improving access to private care facilities, Republicans argued during a joint meeting Thursday of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Human Services.

While reviewing the need for a funding transfer to support the juvenile justice program, as well as why the Legislature was not involved in planning ahead for such an issue, [Rep. Jerry Kooiman](#) (R-Grand Rapids) questioned whether the state facility in Bay Pines Center, located in the Upper Peninsula, would be closed if there is so much available bed space currently in the private facilities, which offer services at a lower rate. Mr. Kooiman said the program must follow the law and look to privates first.

But Bureau of Juvenile Justice Director Leonard Dixon said that the administration has no plans to close the facility and that the numbers the lawmaker was looking at represented only a snapshot of the system.

The Bay Pines facility also is the only of its kind in the Upper Peninsula, Mr. Dixon said, adding that often the state does not have control of where juveniles are placed because the courts can automatically send a child to a certain center or a private facility may reject a juvenile and send him or her back to the state.

“We look for the private provider first,” Mr. Dixon said. “You match the kid up with the best available program. We don’t want to do anything that we wouldn’t want to do to our own kids.”

But [Rep. Bruce Caswell](#) (R-Hillsdale) suggested that if the bureau is facing tough monetary times that it should at least give consideration to having a private facility open to replace the services Bay Pines provides.

“If the privates knew they were getting more kids, they could better prepare,” he said.

[Sen. Bill Hardiman](#) (R-Kentwood) also questioned how the program budgets for the next year and whether the cost of private facilities is placed into that estimation.

“It’s hard to give answers to these questions because there is so much fluctuation,” Mr. Dixon said. “We have had several times during the year where public and privates were full and the kids had to wait in detention facilities.”

The bureau’s finances have taken unexpected hits this year, Mr. Dixon said, including an increase in fuel costs totaling \$600,000, replacement of a broken power line, installation of a fire suppression system to be up to code and establishment of best practices associated with mental health treatment.

The bureau is working with the administration to come up with a plan as to how to deal with these finances.

[Rep. Chris Kolb](#) (D-Ann Arbor) said that while the argument for private facilities can be brought up, more study of the issue is needed.

“It’s not as simple as saying that what they’re doing is cheaper and (we’ll) go with that,” he said.

For future discussions, Mr. Caswell suggested that a survey of probate judges be done to see if they are sending juveniles to certain programs and why, while Mr. Kolb suggested the Bureau provide information on the makeup of the juvenile populations in the private facilities.



## Schools will be hub for health program

Thursday, September 07, 2006

By Dave Murray

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- Kent County schools are banding together with social service agencies to create what educators call a sweeping infusion of physical and mental health help for students and their families.

The plan, called the Kent School Services Network, starts this week as a pilot program in six Grand Rapids schools as well as buildings in Comstock Park and Godfrey Lee.

Educators said the idea is to help students with social and physical problems and eliminate barriers to success in the classroom.

"A lot of this comes from the idea helping to fulfill the mission of No Child Left Behind, but the truth is that it's just the right thing to do," Comstock Park Superintendent Dwight Anderson said.

"If children are not in school, they're not going to learn. And once they start that slippery slope, it becomes easier to miss and fall further and further behind. The goal is to get to the root of the problem and find why the student is missing in the first place and get those families the help they need."

The program places three staff members in each of the pilot buildings: a Spectrum Health nurse, a Human Services Department financial independence worker and a "resource connector" skilled at matching problems with the agencies available to help.

The partnership, more than two years in the making, is planned to be announced today at Alger Middle School in Grand Rapids.

Agencies are contributing their own money, staff and equipment to the partnership, and the Grand Rapids Community Foundation has provided a \$486,000 grant. The Children's Aid Society of New York, one of the nation's largest child welfare agencies, is providing advice.

"This is a perfect example of community agencies coming together," Grand Rapids Superintendent Bernard Taylor said. "We're bringing the services closer to the children and their families, and turning the schools into a kind of hub for the community."

Matthew Van Zetten, who heads the Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council, said the agencies realized that some families had trouble either recognizing they need help or didn't know how to seek assistance. But having staff in the buildings will help spot problems more quickly.

"The idea is to remove the barriers," he said. "For some families, that barrier is transportation, and the schools are places they can get to. For others, it's the knowledge who is out there to help them."

Eight schools were selected for the first round, and if successful the program could spread around the county.

Pine Island Elementary in Comstock Park and Godfrey Lee Early Childhood Center are intended to serve as districtwide hubs. Grand Rapids will offer the programs at Alger, Burton Elementary-Middle School, Coit

Creative Arts Academy, Harrison Park Elementary-Middle School, Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Academy and Sibley Elementary.

The Grand Rapids buildings are either new, recently renovated or are being renovated this year and designed to include specialized rooms for social service workers and nurses.

The program builds on full-service health centers operating in the city's high schools.

**Send e-mail to the author: [dmurray@grpress.com](mailto:dmurray@grpress.com)**

©2006 Grand Rapids Press

© 2006 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



## Autism program receives grant

Thursday, September 07, 2006

HOLLAND – Children's Resource Network of Holland received a \$20,000 grant for a respite care program serving 75 children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The grant was allocated by the Michigan Children's Trust Fund Board of Directors, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect founded in 1982. MCTF allocated a total of \$547,536 to 18 organizations statewide. Thirty-six programs applied for grants.

©2006 Grand Rapids Press

© 2006 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



64

[more...](#)**News Room**

Local News  
Sports  
Opinion  
Obituaries  
Features  
World News  
Archives

**Sections**

Health  
Entertainment  
Town Hall  
Stocks

**Extras****Weather****Classifieds**

Announcements  
Employment  
Merchandise  
Real Estate  
Transportation

**Cheboygan Tribune**

Contact Us  
Rate Card

**Mackinaw Journal**

Contact Us  
News

Want to subscribe to the  
Cheboygan Daily  
Tribune? [Click here!](#)

Have a comment or  
question about our  
website? [Click here!](#)

[Click here](#) to make The  
Cheboygan Tribune your  
start page.

ONLINE EDITION

**Cheboygan Daily Tribune**

308 North Main St. Cheboygan, MI 49721



Welcome to the Tribune!

Friday, September 8, 2006

**Local News****Castagne is re-elected to state prosecutor's association**

By ERICA KOLASKI

Tribune Staff Writer

CHEBOYGAN - Cheboygan County Prosecutor Mickey Castagne was recently re-elected to the Board of Directors of the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan.

Castagne, who has served as prosecutor in Cheboygan since January 2001, will serve a one-year term through July 2007.

She said that the Association is comprised of prosecuting attorneys from each of the 83 counties in Michigan.

"The Board is made up of elected prosecutors from the Association who deal with a number of different things," said Castagne.

She said that in the past year, she has been very active in a committee that was set up to make recommendations that will ultimately go to the governor regarding how and if the child support system should be revamped.

"Last year, the federal government voted to reduce the money that Michigan receives for child support by about \$56 million," she said. "We have been meeting with the Friend of the Court and the State Court Administrators Office to represent prosecutors. We are trying to set up a system to accommodate that \$56 million budget cut.

"While this has been a very time consuming year for me, it is truly an important issue. Next year, the state's child support system won't look the same," she said.

Castagne explained that the Board also discusses new criminal laws and sets up a legislative agenda, as well as determines what kinds of training and programs prosecutors across the state could benefit from.

to public safety and crime victims.

“Ms. Castagne epitomizes those fundamental values and is someone who works tirelessly to make Cheboygan County a safe place to live, work and raise a family,” he said.

“I feel privileged to work with a group of prosecutors from around the state, who are dedicated to public service and doing what's best for victims of crime,” said Castagne.

The Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan was established in 1929 as a voluntary association of all 83 of the state's prosecuting attorneys, the state Attorney General and the U.S. Attorneys serving Michigan.

*[Print this story](#)*

*[Email this story](#)*

Cheboygannews.com is owned and operated by The Cheboygan Daily Tribune.  
Copyright © 2006 The Cheboygan Daily Tribune.  
All rights reserved.

[<<Back](#)

## Child abuse charges filed against Holland couple in baby's death

Updated: Sep 7, 2006 10:34 PM EDT

By Dan Bewley

**HOLLAND-** A West Michigan couple will not face murder charges in Texas. Instead a grand jury indicted Esther and Cipriano Gonzales on felony child abuse charges. Their two-month-old daughter, Cynthea, died in March while the couple lived in Hays County, Texas. Back home in Holland the couple told 24 Hour News 8 they're relieved the murder charges and potential death penalty are off the table but are still frustrated at facing charges of child abuse.

"Just frustrated...tired" said Cipriano Gonzales, "Disappointed that it didn't...everything didn't get thrown out today," added his wife Esther.

The Gonzales' moved to Texas for a better life. Cipriano had just started a new job and his family was helping them get a fresh start. Cynthea died, the couple says, when she stopped breathing while they were feeding her.

Texas prosecutors say the girl was struck in the head. Conflicting reports from medical examiners could not pinpoint the cause of death. The couple was arrested in Holland and spent a month in the Ottawa County jail, then four months in a Texas jail before they posted bond and returned to West Michigan.

Six months later and the Gonzales' decline to talk about specifics of the case but did say they never hurt their child and are looking forward to telling their side of the story, something they could not do before the grand jury.

"I'm confident because I know we didn't do nothing. We're not scared because we didn't do anything wrong," said Esther.

Their hope is to clear their names and let their daughter rest in peace.

"Our daughter, she's past, but she can't rest fully until all of this is over either," added Esther.

The charge they face in Texas is technically called "injury to a child". It's a first degree felony and carries a prison term between five and 99 years. There is no warrant for the couple, they are free to stay in Holland until a trial date is set.



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2006 WorldNow and WOODTV. All Rights Reserved.  
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published September 8, 2006

## Expert: Lisa Holland craved attention

Ricky's mother accused of lying about her son

By Susan Vela  
Lansing State Journal

Lisa Holland lied about and exaggerated her adopted son Ricky's problems in order to get attention for herself, a child abuse expert testified Thursday.

Dr. Elaine Pomeranz of the University of Michigan said Holland's behavior suggests she suffered from "factitious disorder by proxy."

"Ricky's mother saw one thing, and nobody observed that in that (same) time," Pomeranz testified during a pretrial hearing, which lasted more than two hours.

"The perpetrator does it because of their own psychiatric need for attention."

Holland and her husband, Tim, were charged with the 7-year-old boy's murder in February. Her trial is set to start Monday. Tim Holland, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder Tuesday, is expected to testify against her. He says his wife killed Ricky.

Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield said she would wait until a later date to decide if Pomeranz will be allowed to present her testimony to a jury.

Pomeranz's testimony will not be what determines the verdict, Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunning III said. "It's not a case breaker," he said.

Manderfield said Thursday that Pomeranz clearly was an expert, but Andrew Abood, Lisa Holland's attorney, said Pomeranz's protocol in characterizing Lisa Holland's mothering tactics was questionable.

He wanted documented evidence of Holland's exaggerations and need for attention.

"I have my notes reminding me of different dates," Pomeranz said. However, "I did not bring my

### Baby remains ward

Ricky Holland's newborn sister will remain in state custody for now, a court referee decided Thursday.

Casey Jo Caswell, Ricky's biological mother, gave birth to her fifth child on Aug. 30. Within 12 hours, state Department of Human Services officials took custody of the baby.

A hearing Thursday was to determine whether the state should keep custody of the child temporarily until further hearings to decide Caswell's fitness as a mother. The next hearing was set for Oct. 9 before Ingham County Circuit Court Judge George Economy.

All four of Caswell's other children, including Ricky, were adopted by Tim and Lisa Holland. Ricky's siblings are now in the custody of Tim Holland's relatives.

### Related articles:

■ [Lawmakers want ombudsman's office moved](#)



hundreds and hundreds of pages. I was not asked to do that."

Pomeranz based her conclusions on her review of medical records.

"Is this witness qualified? I believe she is," Assistant Prosecutor Mike Ferency said.

Holland's trial is expected to last four to six weeks.

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or [svela@lsj.com](mailto:svela@lsj.com).

---

Copyright 2006 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the  
Terms of Service (updated 12.20.02)

[\[Back\]](#)

[Return to regular web page](#)

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

September 8, 2006

## Wayne Briefs

### Woodhaven

#### Clues sought in arson fire that killed three

Arson crews are still working around the clock to determine what caused a fire that killed twin sisters, a toddler and family dog. Sisters Brook and Heather Slayton, 18, and Brook's 1-year-old son Randolph Reynolds were found dead after fire crews worked for two hours to put out a roaring fire that incinerated their home around 5 a.m. Wednesday. Authorities say the fire started in a bedroom in the rear of the home. A man who escaped the burning home with a burned hand is not considered a suspect in the case, but is being questioned by investigators. An autopsy was performed Thursday, and the results are expected today.

### Canton Township

#### Not guilty plea entered for trucker in homicide

A judge in Marion, Ind. entered a not guilty plea Thursday on behalf of a Canton truck driver accused of falling asleep at the wheel of his rig and causing a crash that killed five people, one of whom was misidentified for several weeks. Robert T. Spencer faces five counts of reckless homicide for accusations he crossed an interstate median April 26 and slammed his truck into a Taylor University van. The case made national news because authorities mixed up the identities of two victims, causing a Caledonia family to believe their 22-year-old daughter was alive, when she had died. A bail hearing is set for Oct. 16, and the trial is scheduled for Jan. 8.

### Wayne County

#### Mental health agency extends services deals

Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano signed an order Thursday granting one-year contract extensions between the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency and its contractors. The order comes amid debate in Lansing and at the county about whether to turn the agency into a quasi-independent authority. The contracts that ensure services will continue for 40,000 residents and were due to expire Sept. 30, said Teresa Blossom, a Ficano spokeswoman.

### Plymouth

#### Traffic restrictions set for city's Fall Festival

Traffic is shut off or restricted around Kellogg Park starting today to accommodate carnival rides and anticipated crowds at this weekend's 51st annual Plymouth Fall Festival. A \$5 fee will be charged Saturday and Sunday for using the city's central parking deck.

[Return to regular web page](#)

[<<Back](#)



## States have to put more welfare recipients to work

WASHINGTON New rules that take effect next month could put some states in jeopardy of losing federal dollars unless they find jobs for tens of thousands of people on welfare.

Pennsylvania, California and Michigan will have to find jobs for a total of nearly 95-thousand people if they want to keep (m) millions of dollars flowing from Washington. The three states are among about two dozen that Washington says have fallen behind in efforts to put welfare recipients to work.

The rules require states to find jobs, job training or community service work for 50-percent of households that get welfare and 90-percent of two-parent households that receive assistance.

The Bush administration says about half the states are in pretty good shape but a-quarter aren't.

Some Democrats want a congressional hearing, saying the new rules will make things more difficult and more expensive.

*Copyright 2006 Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.*



All content © Copyright 2000 - 2006 WorldNow and WOODTV. All Rights Reserved.  
For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#).

# ClickOnDetroit.com

## Accused Child Sex Offender Turns Himself In

POSTED: 11:50 am EDT September 7, 2006  
UPDATED: 7:33 pm EDT September 7, 2006

Accused child sex offender Ken Gourlay, 28, of Detroit turned himself in to authorities on Thursday morning.

Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox announced they have new evidence in the case against Gourlay. Justin Berry, 14, came forward in April and testified in front of U.S. Congress about how Gourlay allegedly lured him into years of child pornography and abuse, Local 4 reported.

The allegation led to an investigation and charges for Gourlay, the station reported. A warrant issued on Gourlay's home in May led to new charges on Thursday, Local 4 reported.

"My office began its own investigation as soon as I learned of Ken Gourlay's involvement with Justin Berry. That initial investigation has now widened to include other victims," Cox said. "I want to commend the strong investigative police work that helped lead to today's charges. My Child and Public Protection Unit will use all the tools in its arsenal to track down, arrest, prosecute, and convict Internet sexual predators."

"This case is a tragedy. What happened to this young victim should never have happened to anyone, let alone a youngster barely into the teen years. No child should ever have their innocence taken away by a sexual predator, no child ever deserves to be harmed and abused, and no child should have to fear the Internet," Cox continued. "Computers and technology can be a great force for good. Unfortunately, in the wrong hands, these same tools can be badly misused to put young people at risk and in grave danger."

Berry claims Gourlay helped him set up Webcam sites where he charged subscribers to watch him perform sexual acts.

Berry is not believed to have been involved in pornography, but is believed to have been sexually assaulted more than a dozen times, Local 4 reported.

There are 20 new felony counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct, each a 15-year felony, for allegedly sexually assaulting the boy for a period of several months in 2005, according to Cox. These 20 new felony charges are related to the sexual assault of the 14-year old boy in addition to the 10 felony counts that were issued against Gourlay on May 15, 2006, involving the alleged exploitation of Justin Berry.

Those charges included two counts of enticing a child to engage in sexually abusive activity, each a 20-year felony; two counts of using a computer to communicate with another to engage in child sexually abusive Activity, each a 20-year felony; one count of criminal sexual conduct, third degree, a 15-year felony; two counts of distributing or promoting child sexually abusive material, each a seven-year felony; two counts of using a computer to communicate with another to distribute child sexually abusive material of a minor, a 10-year felony; and one count of accosting a child for immoral purposes, a four-year felony.

These charges were bound over for trial by J. Cedric Simpson, Chief Judge of the 14A District Court, after hearing testimony from Berry and Gourlay's former roommate, among others. A pre-trial is scheduled for Sept. 20 at 1:30 p.m. before Judge Archie Brown.

Stay tuned to ClickOnDetroit.com and Local 4 for the very latest.

*Copyright 2006 by ClickOnDetroit.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.*

[Return to regular web page](#)



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

September 8, 2006

## Man arrested in 2nd sex case

Detroiter awaiting trial in Ann Arbor now accused of assaulting another boy in 2005.

**Darren A. Nichols / The Detroit News**

**DETROIT** -- A Detroit man facing trial on allegations he raped a teenage Internet sex star was arrested Thursday on claims he molested a 14-year-old boy, according to Attorney General Mike Cox.

Kenneth Gourlay, 29, will be charged with 20 counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct counts for allegedly assaulting a 14-year-old boy over a period of several months in 2005. Authorities couldn't say where the alleged attacks occurred.

"This case is a tragedy," Cox said in a released statement. "No child should ever have their innocence taken away by a sexual predator, no child deserves to be harmed and abused and no child should have to fear the Internet."

Each felony count carries a 15-year penalty.

It's the latest trouble for Gourlay, who is scheduled to stand trial Sept. 20 in Ann Arbor in a nationally watched case in which he is accused of molesting Justin Berry of Bakersfield, Calif.

Now 19, Berry has become something of a celebrity after he was profiled in the New York Times about his one-time Web cam operation that featured him nude.

But Gourlay's attorneys called the new charges election-year posturing by Cox, a Republican who faces re-election Nov. 7 against Amos Williams.

Attorney James Howarth called the number of charges "magical," considering it's a case of a youth who supposedly had consensual sex with Gourlay.

He said the charges were filed after Gourlay posted a \$500,000 cash bond in mid-August in the Berry case. The authorities knew about the incident since July 21, but did nothing about it, he said.

"This is a classic case of prosecutorial overkill," Howarth said. "Charging 20 (counts) is headline hunting, and it's nothing but an attempt to get certain people's name on television and in front of the public."

Gourlay faces 10 felonies in the Berry case in 22nd Circuit Court. He was arrested May 15 after Berry testified before the U.S. Congress Gourlay molested him at his home. The second alleged victim was identified in evidence seized in Gourlay's home in April.

During a preliminary hearing, Berry testified Gourlay lured him to Ann Arbor on the pretense of a computer camp and molested him.

You can reach Darren A. Nichols at (734) 462-2190 or [dnichols@detnews.com](mailto:dnichols@detnews.com).

[Return to regular web page](#)

[Return to regular web page](#)



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

September 8, 2006

## Sex offenders swept up

Two-day countywide sweep leads to 17 arrests

Darren A. Nichols / The Detroit News

**DETROIT** – Unannounced visits to sex offenders in Wayne County resulted in 17 arrests during a two-day sweep this week timed to coincide with the start of school.

Dubbed "Operation Safe Passage," the sting paired sheriff's deputies with local police Wednesday and Thursday to ensure that convicted sex offenders comply with a state registry that forces them to list their addresses with police after their release from prison.



About 30 offenders were targeted in communities including Garden City, Westland, Livonia, Taylor, Romulus and Inkster.

"We hope this is another step to help make the streets safer for children and neighborhoods safe," said Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans. "What we're starting to build is accountability in the process.

"Now they know they are going to be checked and there are teeth in the requirements."

Deputies made arrests for suspected violations of the sex offender registry, second-degree criminal sexual conduct, assault and battery and fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct.

"We want them to comply. If this is the only way to get their attention, then so be it," Evans said.

"It's something we have to do. We targeted 30 people, and 17 have been arrested so that is a pretty significant number. We want to stop to make sure those rules are being followed."

At least one of those arrested, however, was later released by a judge after discovering the man had, in fact, registered with police.

The operation is Evans' second in as many years targeting the county's 3,132 sex offenders.

Last year, he galvanized officers from his Stop Check unit with a sweep of addresses of 400 known sex offenders and other criminals with assault-related offenses across Wayne County just before the start of school.

A team of 150, including state troopers and officers from 12 suburban agencies, fanned out across the county to ensure ex-convicts met conditions of parole – including those that forbid them to live within 1,000 feet of school zones, have access to computers or possess pornography.

About 50 percent of parolees violate their probation in some manner, according to officials. Most often it's the requirement to register their correct home address and any address changes within 10 days.

Michigan Department of Corrections employees routinely check on those released and find violations often are foiled by the offenders having either hidden evidence or in some cases, even fled the area.

You can reach Darren A. Nichols at (734) 462-2190 or [dnichols@detnews.com](mailto:dnichols@detnews.com).

[Return to regular web page](#)

[Return to regular web page](#)

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **The Detroit News**  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

September 8, 2006

## Oakland Briefs

**Delores Patterson / The Detroit News****Novi**

### **Man accused of using Web to solicit child sex**

A 60-year-old Onsted man has been charged with soliciting sex from a minor over the Internet after being arrested outside the Emagine movie theaters in Novi. James A. Samek was arraigned Wednesday before Novi 52-1 District Magistrate Judith Holtz after he arrived at a meeting he thought he had set up with a 14-year-old girl for the purposes of having sex. Instead he was met by members of the Michigan Attorney General's Internet Crimes task force. Samek is charged with one-count of using a computer to commit child sexually abusive activity, a 20-year felony, and three counts of using a computer to disseminate obscene material to a minor, a four-year felony. Holtz set bond at \$100,000 and scheduled a Sept. 15 preliminary exam.

**White Lake Township**

### **Waterford Twp. man charged in break-in**

A 22-year-old Waterford Township man faces charges after being arrested in the break-in of a White Lake Oaks Golf Course building earlier this week. John C. Gaik is charged with breaking and entering of a building in the 11:35 p.m. Sept. 5 incident. Police say they responded to a motion alarm in the building, found a door had been broken, then spotted Gaik along a fence with two cases of beer. Gaik was ordered held in the Oakland County Jail in lieu of \$50,000 bond.

**Waterford**

### **School guidelines set on reduced-price meals**

Oakland County schools have released the policy for free and reduced-price meals for children unable to pay the full price of meals served under the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. The chart can be found on the Oakland Schools Web site, [www.oakland.k12.mi.us](http://www.oakland.k12.mi.us).

**Milford**

### **Village manager agrees to 1-year contract, raise**

Village Manager Arthur Shufflebarger recently rejected a three-year contract from Milford in favor of a one-year deal that was approved by the Village Council this week. Under the new plan, Shufflebarger is expected to receive a \$2,700 pay increase, bumping his salary to \$85,500, as well as a \$105 monthly increase in his retirement plan.

[Return to regular web page](#)



## Holland couple must return to Texas for child abuse charges

Friday, September 08, 2006

By John Tunison and Shandra Martinez

The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND -- A couple must return to Texas to face charges for the death of their infant daughter, but on a felony less than the capital murder charge authorities initially sought six months ago.

Cipriano Gonzales IV and his wife, Esther, both 24, have been indicted by a Texas grand jury for injury to a child, carrying a penalty of five to 99 years in prison upon conviction.

The Gonzaleses, accused and arrested in March of murdering their 2-month-old daughter, Cynthea, were held for four months in jail on a fugitive warrant until they were released on a personal recognizance bond in late July.

The Gonzaleses maintain their innocence, claiming Cynthea stopped breathing as they tried to feed her a bottle just eight days after they moved from Holland to San Marcos, Texas.

The indictment came as disappointing news to Cipriano Gonzales IV.

He hoped Texas prosecutors would dismiss the case, partly because of conflicting autopsy reports.

"I'm not so good, but I'm with family," an emotional Gonzales said Thursday. "It is just how the law is. They didn't want to let it go. They want to show they are right. I feel it's a grudge they have against us. They are trying to cover up the mistakes they made."

Gonzales expects he and his wife will have to leave their daughter and return to Texas from Holland. He hopes they can remain on bond so he can at least return to his job as a cook at the University of Texas at San Marcos.

An initial autopsy on Cynthea ruled the cause of death as inconclusive.

But a second autopsy by a different medical examiner recently concluded Cynthea died of "blunt force traumatic head injury" and termed the death a homicide, San Marcos Police Chief Howard Williams said.

Police are still investigating the case and "believe there are more witnesses," Williams said. He asked anyone with information to call police at (512) 753-2300.

Questions have swirled around the autopsies because Cynthea's brain was accidentally discarded at the funeral home after the first autopsy, and the second medical examiner likely only had access to slides of brain material.

Wes Mau, an assistant prosecutor for Hays County, Texas, where Cynthea died, did not immediately know why the grand jury sought the reduced charge.

"We don't have any direct control over them," he said. "They obviously thought these were the charges that were justified."



Leslie Halasz, an Austin, Texas, attorney representing Cipriano Gonzales IV, said she hopes to examine the second autopsy report in coming days.

"What this means is the grand jury didn't think there was enough evidence to hold them for murder," she said. "But it's still a very serious charge."

**Send e-mail to the author: [jtunison@grpress.com](mailto:jtunison@grpress.com)**

©2006 Grand Rapids Press

© 2006 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



## Couple indicted on injury to child

Friday, September 08, 2006

By John Tunison and Shandra Martinez

### CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE

A couple must return to Texas to face charges for the death of their infant daughter, but on a felony less than the capital murder charge authorities initially sought six months ago.

Cipriano Gonzales IV and his wife, Esther, both 24, have been indicted by a Texas grand jury for injury to a child, carrying a penalty of five to 99 years in prison upon conviction.

The Gonzaleses, accused and arrested in March of murdering their 2-month-old daughter, Cynthea, were held for four months in jail on a fugitive warrant until they were released on a personal recognizance bond in late July.

The Gonzaleses maintain their innocence, claiming Cynthea stopped breathing as they tried to feed her a bottle just eight days after they moved from Holland to San Marcos, Texas.

The indictment came as disappointing news to Cipriano Gonzales IV. He hoped Texas prosecutors would dismiss the case, partly because of conflicting autopsy reports.

"I'm not so good, but I'm with family," an emotional Gonzales said Thursday. "It is just how the law is. They didn't want to let it go. They want to show they are right. I feel its a grudge they have against us. They are trying to cover up the mistakes they made.

"They are the DA. They have to say they were right in the first place. From the very beginning, there was a lot of mistakes in how they did the investigation and the interrogation. That will all come out."

Gonzales expects he and his wife will have to leave their daughter and return to Texas. He hopes they can remain on bond so he can at least return to his job as a cook at the University of Texas at San Marcos. Although he had held his job for a few weeks when his daughter died, he was told he could return to his position at a later date.

"We've got a lot of family support. Everybody has been real helpful with us. We've had the Holland, Michigan, community standing by our side," he said.

An initial autopsy on Cynthea ruled the cause of death as inconclusive. But a second autopsy by a different medical examiner recently concluded Cynthea died of "blunt force traumatic head injury" and termed the death a homicide, San Marcos Police Chief Howard Williams said.

Police are still investigating the case and "believe there are more witnesses," Williams said. He asked anyone with information to call police at (512) 753-2300.

Questions have swirled around the autopsies because Cynthea's brain was accidentally discarded at the funeral home after the first autopsy, and the second medical examiner likely only had access to slides of brain material.

Wes Mau, an assistant prosecutor for Hays County, Texas, where Cynthea died, did not immediately know why the grand jury sought the reduced charge.

"We don't have any direct control over them," he said. "They obviously thought these were the charges that were justified."

He said the couple will remain free on bond, for the moment, as long as they appear for scheduled hearings in Texas.

©2006 Muskegon Chronicle

© 2006 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



## Sex charges levied against retiree, 60

Friday, September 08, 2006

By Josh Jarman

[jjarman@citpat.com](mailto:jjarman@citpat.com) -- 768-4945

An Onsted man has been arrested and accused of using the Internet to lure a teenage girl to a sexual rendezvous.

James Arthur Samek, 60, was arraigned Wednesday in Novi's District Court on one felony count of child sexually abusive activity, one count of using a computer to commit the activity, and three counts of using a computer to disseminate obscene material to a minor. He faces up to 20 years in prison.

"Mr. Samek was chatting online with someone he thought was a 14-year-old girl," said Ari Faneuil, a spokesman for the attorney general's office, which conducted the investigation. "The girl was in fact a special agent."

The agent posed as a minor, Faneuil said, as part of an investigation that began Sept. 1.

Faneuil said Samek propositioned the agent for sex and exchanged obscene messages, including Web camera footage of himself masturbating.

Samek set up a meeting for sex with the agent at the Emagine movie theater in Novi, where he was apprehended, Faneuil said.

Samek's bond is set at \$100,000, and he is scheduled to appear for a preliminary examination Sept. 15. As of late Thursday, Samek had not hired a lawyer, or posted bond, according to court records. The retired Ford Motor Co. employee has no prior criminal history, Faneuil said.

©2006 Jackson Citizen Patriot

© 2006 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.